



(BCMA) *Bar Code Medication Administration*



Right

Patient

Drug

Dose

Time

Bar Code Medication Administration (BCMA) uses modern technology to substantially reduce inpatient medication errors. BCMA electronically identifies the patient then validates and documents the medication administered. This innovative technology ensures each patient receives the correct medication, in the correct dose, and at the correct time. The software visually alerts health care providers when the proper conditions are not met.

VA was one of the first organizations to develop and pilot bar code technology in administering medications. It started when a VA nurse watched an attendant check in a rental car with a bar code scanner. She wondered why the same system could not be used to increase patient safety when administering medications.

Now, nurses throughout VA use handheld bar code scanners to positively match the bar code on the patient's wristband to the bar code imprinted on every medication dose.

BCMA ensures the delivery of safe, effective, and high quality patient care to Veterans and promotes excellence in health care at the bedside and beyond. Decision-making capabilities are improved and communication between nurses, pharmacists, and physicians is enhanced through the use of BCMA.

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